

The conclusion has been reached that, for unskilled labour, it is not practicable to employ Samoans, except on contract, a system which is distasteful to them, and that the prosecution of public works with any degree of economy can only be achieved by a gang of Chinese, a draft of whom will consequently be taken from the shipment of coolies arriving in October.

In the case of skilled work closer supervision is possible and a nearer approach to reasonable cost is achieved. The policy of employing Samoans in preference to imported labour will be continued in this class of work in the endeavour to train efficient wood-workers, metal-workers, painters, plumbers, &c., from the indigenous people of the country.

CHINESE LABOUR.

The Samoan people being manifestly unavailable for labour on the plantations of Europeans, the Germans imported both Chinese and Melanesians for the purpose. The Melanesians have been referred to above. In 1914 there were 2,200 Chinese indentured labourers on the various plantations in Samoa. During the military occupation three repatriations took place. This great reduction, whereby the numbers were reduced to 532 (together with the repatriation of drafts of black boys) caused great deterioration in the plantations, which must be supposed to have required the full number of 2,200 Chinese to carry on to their full production. On the 1st April, 1920, the number of Chinese in Samoa was, as above mentioned, 832. These were employed principally on the German plantations other than the D.H. and P.G. plantations, the great bulk of which have become the property of New Zealand, and are administered by Crown Estates. The whole of these men were in 1919 reindentured, the contract expiring on the 31st July, 1921.

In August, 1920, 500 labourers, recruited with the assistance of the Hong Kong Government, arrived in the s.s. "Haldis." Their contracts, which were to this Administration, were signed in Samoa after arrival, and the whole were absorbed by the Administration. A few men (thirteen) were repatriated on this occasion. The number of Chinese labourers in Samoa at this date (August, 1920) therefore was—Old labourers, 819; "Haldis" labourers, 502: total, 1,321.

About the same time the Chinese-Consul, J. C. Lin, was replaced by Consul Ahlo, and from that time reasonable control of the labourers became more and more difficult. Realizing that the contracts of the 813 old labourers would expire on the 31st July, 1921, and that many of them would desire to remain in Samoa, proposals for a new contract based on the "Haldis" contract (which had been approved by the Hong Kong authorities) were elaborated and submitted to the Consul preparatory to publication to the labourers. The attitude taken by the Administration was that it was liable to repatriate the 819 labourers on the 31st July, and would do so, but that it was willing to re-engage such of the labourers as wished to remain and who were considered desirable of retention. The reply of the Consul was to the effect that the Chinese Government did not approve the reindenture, and requested that the whole of these men should be allowed to remain in Western Samoa as free settlers. This request was refused, it being obvious that the permission to 819 Chinese to establish themselves in Samoa without restriction would not relieve the labour situation, and would be the beginning of an influx of Chinese, who would eventually push the Samoans off their lands. No settlement was reached on the subject, as neither party would give way on the essential principle. In the meantime the labourers were given the opportunity of re-engaging if they so desired, when practically all expressed a desire to return. It has since been ascertained that this expression of desire was not a true expression, but was largely the result of the intimidation of secret societies or of other agencies. It is anticipated that from fifty to a hundred men will be accepted for retention from those now offering.

Arrangements have been made for the repatriation of the old labourers, and for the introduction of new labourers from Hong Kong to replace them. On this repatriation and introduction being effected, it is estimated that there will then be available for labour purposes in Samoa (in addition to the 201 black boys above mentioned) the following Chinese: "Haldis" men, 502; old labourers retained (say) 50; "Ascot" men (say) 950: total, 1,502.

The cost of the importation of Chinese is very considerable, and the cost of repatriation falls almost entirely upon the Administration, on behalf of Crown Estates, no system having been adopted in the past for the creation of a repatriation fund. To obviate this in the future, and to recover the cost of importation, a periodical levy will be made upon employers, so that, though the expenditure is primarily made by the Administration, the burden will be carried by the industries employing labour.

SAMOAN OBSERVATORY.

This Observatory was established in Western Samoa about 1902 by the German authorities in conjunction with the University of Gottingen. It is now the property of the New Zealand Government. During the New Zealand military occupation the Director, Dr. Angenheister, and his assistant were permitted to carry on in order to ensure continuity of the work of the institution. This has continued up to the present time without interruption. Immediately after the cessation of hostilities the question of the future control and maintenance of the Observatory was considered, and in order to assist the Government to come to a proper determination advantage was taken of the visit of H.M.S. "New Zealand" to Western Samoa to secure a report from Admiral of the Fleet, Viscount Jellicoe, on the value of the work, from a naval, commercial, and scientific point of view. The New Zealand Government Astronomer collaborated with the Naval authorities in the preparation of this report, and subsequently Dr. E. Marsden, Professor of Physics, of Victoria College, Wellington, also visited Samoa and furnished a detailed supplementary report. As a result of these reports and recommendations, the Observatory is being continued under the control of the New Zealand Government and at the joint cost of the New Zealand and British Governments and the Carnegie Institutions of Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

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